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**Linda McCulloch**  
Superintendent

DATE: January 2, 2006

TO: School Food Authority Administrators

FROM: Christine Emerson, Director  
School Nutrition Programs

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Best Practices Awards

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the Mountain Plains Regional Office is offering "Best Practices Awards" in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) for FY 2006. In order to encourage and reward outstanding practices in school food service, the Regional Office will recognize outstanding practices in three categories in schools and School Food Authorities (SFAs) participating in the NSLP and/or SBP.

The three categories include:

1. Reaching Needy Children in the Summer
2. Increasing School Breakfast Program Access
3. Healthy School Nutrition Environment

Each of these categories is important to a healthy school environment and has an impact on nutrition and physical activity. Please review the categories on Attachment 1.

Schools are encouraged to nominate themselves and other schools in the state. Nominations will be accepted from State Education Agencies, SFAs and schools participating the NSLP and/or SBP. The Regional Office will present awards to a winner in each category.

A nomination should consist of:

- A complete and accurate description of the practice (250, but not to exceed 300 words)
- Appropriate numbers, such as dollars saved or increased participation
- Relevant history, impact, and/or cost effectiveness
- Documenting photographs or newspaper articles
- One copy of any coloring books, posters or videos that have been developed

*"It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve."*

Fiscal Year 2006 Best Practices Awards

January 2, 2005

Page Two

- Name and telephone number of a contact person (printed or typed to alleviate any question of spelling)
- Mailing address
- Size or average daily participation of school or SFA
- The category for the nomination
- State Agency Directors approval

The SFA/School Nomination Form is provided as Attachment 2.

The criteria, which will be used in evaluating nominees are provided in Attachment 3.

**NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED TO SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS BY MARCH 15, 2006. Nominations received after this date will not be considered.**

If you have questions, please contact School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501.

Attachments

## BEST PRACTICES AWARDS CATEGORIES

Ideas are given for each category, however, these ideas are not intended as limitations. Nominations of creative or innovative ideas in all areas are encouraged. The three categories are:

Reaching Needy Children in the Summer – School Food Authorities that expand school lunch or breakfast service under the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs during the summer months or who sponsor or vend summer feeding programs under the Summer Food Service Program or Seamless Summer Option to reach needy children. Nominated School Food Authorities should receive credit for all free or reduced price meals served to needy children under the National School Lunch Program, Seamless Summer Option and all meals served in the Summer Food Service Program. Provide the number of eligible meals served in June, July, and August, 2005 by meal type; i.e., breakfasts, lunches, and snacks. Activities can include incorporation of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, MyPyramid, and promotion of the “Eat Smart. Play Hard.” campaign as well as use of other Team Nutrition resources and materials.

Increasing School Breakfast Program Access – Activities and/or other creative or innovative ideas that were developed to promote the School Breakfast Program, increase participation in an existing School Breakfast Program or to establish a new breakfast program in a nonparticipating site(s). Identify barriers to participation and how they were eliminated. Note any partnerships that were developed within the community to collaborate on ways to improve the breakfast program participation or to start new breakfast programs. Include activities to promote School Breakfast Week. Include enrollment and participation figures and percent of increase and/or the number of new programs established. Activities can include incorporation of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, MyPyramid, and promotion of the “Eat Smart. Play Hard.” campaign as well as use of other Team Nutrition resources and materials.

Healthy School Nutrition Environment – There are six components of a healthy school nutrition environment, which are: A commitment to Nutrition and Physical Activity; Quality School Meals; Other Healthy Food Choices; Pleasant Eating Experiences; Nutrition Education; and Marketing. Each one is important and has an impact on nutrition and physical activity. The definitions of success, suggested activities, and the how to for making improvements are listed in the Guide to Local Action booklet in the Changing the Scene Kit. Activities can include the following: Revising meals to meet the Dietary Guidelines, such as ensuring children receive daily physical activity; Striving to meet criteria for the HealthierUS School Challenge, which can be found at the following website: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html>; and Implementation of a Wellness Policy that goes above and beyond USDA requirements, such as establishing a policy that requires a *fresh fruit and/or raw vegetable* served at each lunch period.

## NOMINATION FORM

### Best Practices Award

#### U.S. Department of Agriculture/Food and Nutrition Service

Name of School or School Food Authority (i.e. Sponsor) being nominated (no individuals, please):

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Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Average Daily Participation:

Number of Schools: \_\_\_\_\_

Category (*check only one*):

- ☐ Reaching Needy Children in the Summer
- ☐ Increasing School Breakfast Program Access
- ☐ Healthy School Nutrition Environment

Submitted by (Type or Print Name/Title): \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (*if different than school being nominated*): \_\_\_\_\_

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State Agency Directors approval \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Practice (*Include information on cost, history, and impact. Supporting documents or additional pages may be attached*)

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## **BEST PRACTICES AWARDS CRITERIA**

**1. Evidence of sustained excellence (20 points)**

Consideration should be given to overall management of the program. Schools and school food authorities that have run a superior program for some length of time should receive the highest score.

**2. Innovation (20 points)**

An idea that gives a new and effective twist to an old solution or that is an innovative and successful addition to school food service should be rated accordingly. Creative and clever ideas should receive maximum ratings.

**3. Impact (20 points)**

Evidence of increased participation or increased support or recognition from students, parents, teachers, or the community.

**4. Cost effectiveness and efficiency (20 points)**

The idea should make good use of the available resources and labor. An expensive new computer system that makes a major improvement in efficiency could be cost effective if the expenditure is in proportion to the results. Manpower and budgetary requirements should be reasonable in relation to the results.

**5. Use of “Eat Smart. Play Hard.” campaign material (5 points)**

Use of Team Nutrition material (5 points)

**6. Transferability (10 points)**

Awards should establish standards of excellence for other States to strive toward. Some judgment should be made as to how easily the idea could be implemented by other schools or SFAs.

**7. Presentation (10 points)**

The material should be well presented. It should be well organized, complete, clear and succinct. Although well-written material may be rated highly, objective measures of success, results, and such items as photographs or letters of support from appropriate users, i.e., students, PTA member or teachers should also be considered as part of the presentation.